



Introduction

The purpose of the Service Center Initiative (SCI) Modernization Plan is to provide a comprehensive description of the partner agency plan to attain the vision of “one-stop shopping” for USDA customers at the county level. The document serves multiple purposes:

- ▲ Review of Current Business and Technology Environments.
- ▲ Strategic Vision for the Future.
- ▲ Concept of Future Service Center Operations.
- ▲ Synopsis of Planning Efforts.
- ▲ Management Structure for the Initiative.
- ▲ ***Modernization Initiatives for the USDA.***

The document replaces the 1995 Service Center CONOPS, summarizes the current Service Center Strategic Plan, catalogs all SCI project plans in Volume II, and describes the management framework for the initiative.

Integrated throughout the Plan, highlighted in bold and italicized, are USDA actions resulting from the OMB/USDA Working Group proposals for County-Based Agencies.

The document is divided into four sections:

Section 1—Current Environment

Current Environment identifies the Interdepartmental and Federal studies and regulations that relate to the Service Center Initiative (SCI). It also discusses how the SCI is striving to meet the guidelines set forth in the reports by detailing the current business and technical environments of the three partner agencies and the SCI. Section 1 closes with a discussion of the SCI Business Case and the gaps that have been identified between where the SCI is today and where it needs to be

based on interdepartmental and Federal regulations.

Section 2—Service Center Vision

Service Center Vision begins with a description of the overall SCI goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving them. It then leads into a description of the Model Service Center Vision and explains how we will meet this objective incrementally. A description of the technical architecture defined for this program closes out the section. The architecture is broken out into four layers and each of these layers is defined in detail in the Service Center Vision. The four architecture layers are:

- ▲ Business Architecture.
- ▲ Data Architecture.
- ▲ Applications Architecture.
- ▲ Technical Architecture.

The architecture view allows the reader to understand the relationships between the business drivers (business architecture), the information required to do business (data architecture), the software applications that provide business functionality (Applications Architecture), and the enabling technology and communications (technical architecture).

Section 3—Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan is the four-phased implementation approach to the SCI. It shows the integration of services and technology as well as the integrated Service Center, virtual Service Center, and optimization schedules. Detailed accomplishments for each phase of the initiative are outlined in this section.

Section 4—Management Processes and Strategy

Management Processes and Strategy identifies the methodology used to manage this massive program effort. It defines the SCI organiza-



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tion as well as the processes used to mitigate risk and provide proactive management support.

This is a dynamic working document. There are significant ongoing changes impacting each of the partner agencies, and it is critical that the views presented in this document be fully supported by the agency business and technical leadership. The use of Business Area Reference Groups, composed of agency business leaders, to act as the business area executive sponsors has worked well to gain partner support and integrate the business area strategic direction. The SCI Modernization Plan will be provided to external stakeholders as required to keep them abreast of this important initiative.

In testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee in February 1999, Secretary of Ag-

riculture Glickman testified that improving customer service and program delivery was a major effort in the department, although USDA has not done well in reaching the under-served. He further stated that USDA traditionally has been organized in a decentralized manner but is changing by collocating Service Centers, streamlining, and implementing administrative convergence—all while downsizing 22,000 employees since 1993. Throughout this change, the SCI has been at the forefront of these departmental initiatives and has served a critical integrating function. The SCI Modernization Plan describes how the SCI will continue to serve the interagency partnership as the integrating mechanism for some of the change underway within the Department of Agriculture.